

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Paul E. Joseph Stadium Groundbreaking Event Planned For July 6

Business / **Published On June 30, 2017 10:40 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **June 30, 2017**



With the additional \$480,000 requested by Governor Kenneth Mapp for work on the Paul E. Joseph Stadium approved by lawmakers, the administration [has set a July 6 date](#) for a groundbreaking ceremony to kick off one of the most delayed projects in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Senators on Wednesday approved the additional funding, which Mr. Mapp said was needed to mitigate potential flooding issues, among other uses. Attending the affair will be the governor, Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter, and Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Pedro Cruz. The ad is requesting the presence of community members as well.

The groundbreaking event comes well past two years into the Mapp administration, after the governor stopped construction -- which started during the waning days of the de Jongh Administration -- contending that a proper plan was not in place. In fact, the July 6 groundbreaking will be the second such event for the same project in just over two years, [with the first happening in December 2014](#).

How long will it take to complete construction? Well, with the multiple revisions that were made to the original project, the timeline of completion has yet to be made known. However, the original contract estimated 30 months of work, or 2.5 years.

When the job was [originally delayed](#), the governor cited various reasons for halting construction. Mr. Mapp had said that the original contract awarded to St. Croix-based GEC, LLC, was hastily put together, and that it was approved and signed by former Governor John P. de Jongh, even while the contractor did not have a single design to show.

"The Paul E. Joseph project in Frederiksted, which is a \$20 million project, I have directed for that project to be frozen," the governor said when announcing the halt. "I visited the project on Sunday. As many of you know, that project was put together in haste."

He added: "What is so troubling about that project is that the government has entered into a contract for a \$20 million project for which there is not a single concept or design. The contract allows the vendor to design a stadium and surrounding areas, bill the government at the cost of 10 percent, put it together, and they give us a \$10 million project, the contract says the contractor and the government will split the savings, so the contractor will end up with a \$5 million bonus. We could have a stadium worth \$10 million, and you, the people of the Virgin Islands, would be out \$20 million." Since then, however, GEC has satisfied the governor's concerns.

Mr. Mapp revealed his plan to [expand the original vision](#) during the 2016 Chamber of Commerce Meeting, held at The Palms at Pelican Cove. There, Mr. Mapp made known that the expansion would add another \$15 million to the \$20 million original contract to complete the project, and its completion date had been pushed back to June, 2018. And in a separate press release in 2015 [announcing commencement of work](#) which [never happened](#), the governor pinned the delay with the goal to expand as the inauguration of Frederiksted's revitalization.

"This is the beginning of a vision for the revitalization of Frederiksted that was developed through the design charrette process in 2005 while I was PFA director of Finance and Administration," the governor said in October 2015. "I want to thank the administration's team of attorneys along with Commissioners Gustav James, Pedro Cruz and Randolph Bennett and the PFA's consultant, Coastal Systems-USVI, for working with the representatives of GEC, LLC to get this significant project back on track."

But with the territory coming under intense financial pressure in 2016, the governor's grand plan for the stadium has been greatly curtailed. He had first estimated that an additional \$15 million would be needed to realize his vision, but that amount was diminished to the \$480,000, which the governor said will be used not for expansion, but rather flood mitigation and relative issues.

According to Government House, the stadium will be a modern sports complex designed to latest standards with the capacity to provide state-of-the-art facilities for local athletes, and will attract sports tourism to the island of St. Croix.

© Viconsortium 2026